

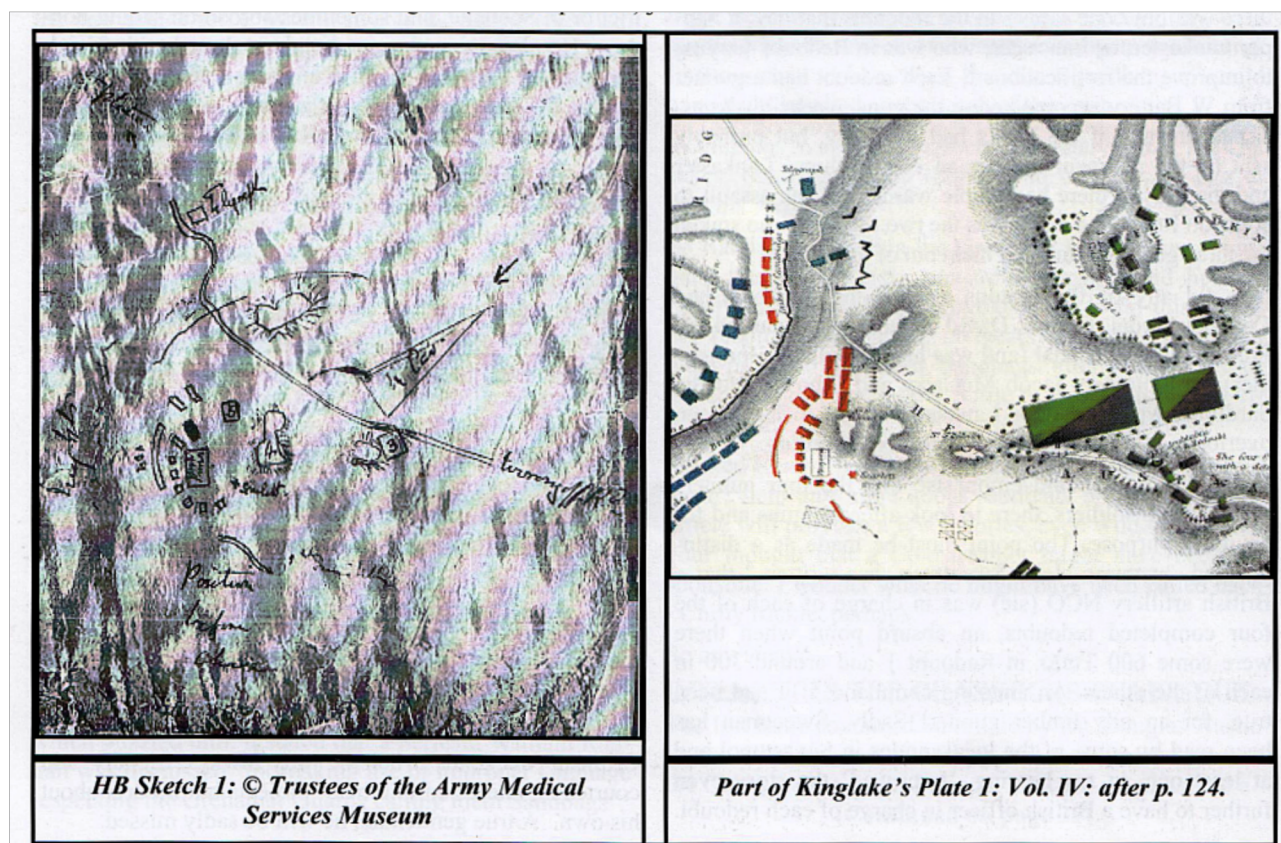
Nolan at Balaklava: (Part V: New Evidence and New Belief)**by Dr Douglas J Austin 17 [TWC 26(4) p14 2009]**

In this article, I describe a group of significant and wholly unexpected records that have, very recently, emerged from the archives. In doing so, I am obliged to challenge the main conclusion reached by David Kelsey in his article ‘Evidence and Belief: Captain Nolan’s Final Moments’¹ - that Nolan’s attempt to divert the course of the Light Brigade is an ‘enduring myth’. Beyond question, David ably presented and appraised the evidence then available to him - in February, 2003. One result of my series of articles ² has been, however, to demonstrate that re-interpretation of ‘old’ in combination with ‘new’ evidence supports a very strong case to the contrary. My series is an earnest extension of his efforts and, of course, it is equally open to evidence-based challenge.

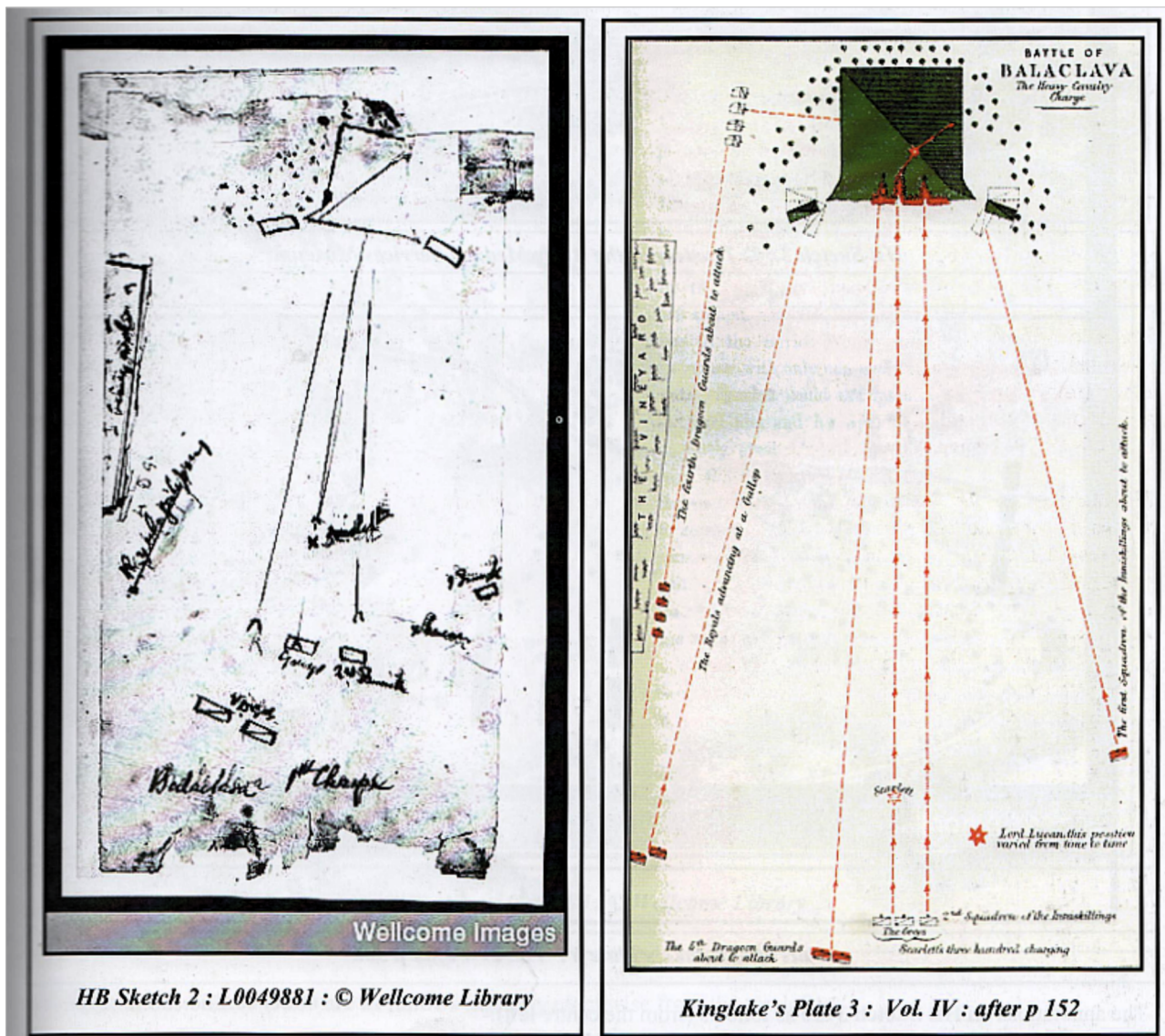
While researching the medical affairs of the British Army in the Crimea, Mike Hinton came across six loose sketches among the ‘Memoirs and Papers of William Daverell Cattell ³, Assistant Surgeon, 5th Dragoon Guards, during the Crimean War, and later Deputy Surgeon General’, held in the Wellcome Library, London (Reference RAMC/391). Mike directed me to them and I immediately recognised one of them as relevant to the printed history of the ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’ at Balaklava while three others relate to the Heavy Brigade’s movements during the battle. With permission from the Trustees of the Army Medical Services Museum, I reproduce those four sketches below. The fifth and sixth sketches are not relevant to this article. The same handwriting (Cattell’s own) appears on all six sketches and as corrections to his typed draft Memoirs, ca. 1905.

I refer to Volume IV of the 1st Edition of Kinglake’s ‘*The Invasion of the Crimea*’, Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, published in 1868. That volume includes nine Plates (printed by J. Jobbins, London) while identical Plates (printed by A. Ritchie & Son, Edinburgh) appear in Volume V of the ‘*Cabinet Edition*’ of 1877 and also in Volume V of the ‘*New Edition*’ of 1889. The three Heavy Brigade sketches (**HB Sketch 1**, **HB Sketch 2** and **HB Sketch 3**) in the Cattell Papers relate to Kinglake’s Plates 1, 3 and 6.

HB Sketch 1 is labelled ‘**Position before Charge**’ and shows the early disposition of the Heavy Brigade around the vineyard near Redoubt No. 6 at the Western end of the Causeway Heights. Although it wrongly numbers the Causeway redoubts as Nos. 5, 4 and 3 from West to East instead Nos. 6, 5 and 4, it is very strikingly similar to the central section of Kinglake’s Plate 1, including the topography near the Woronzoff Road. It does not show the five regiments of the Light Brigade fronted by six guns (“I” Troop RHA) just to the south of that road.



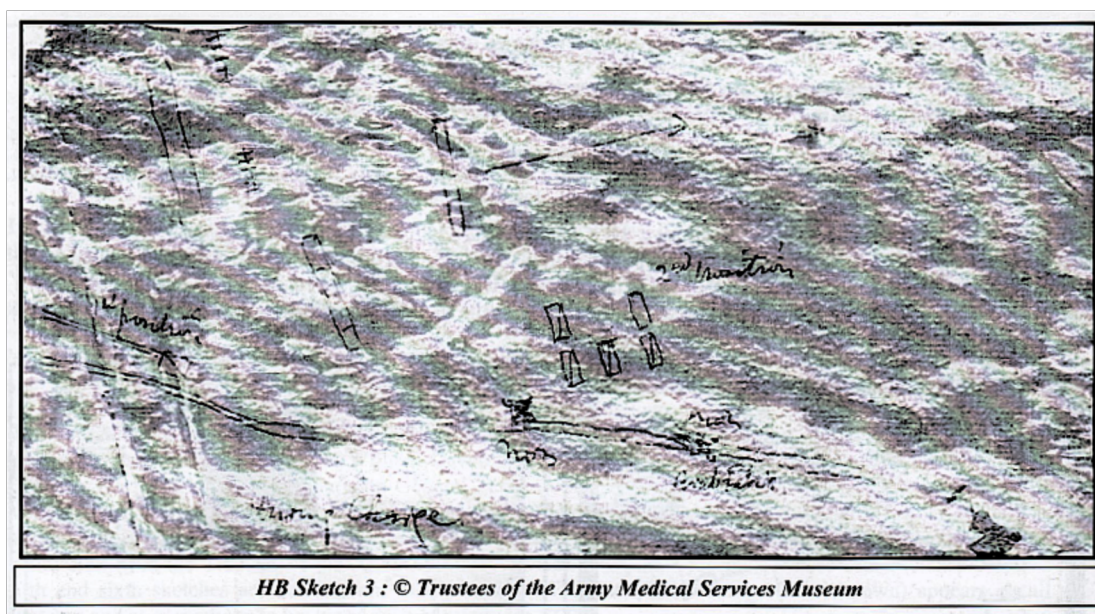
The annotations on **HB Sketch 1** are as follows (roughly clockwise from the top left):- / **To Plateau** / **Telegraph** / **Rn Cav.** / **Woronzoff Rd** / **3** / **1st Inniskillens** / **4** / **(*) Scarlett.** / **5** / **Position before Charge** / **Vineyard** / **V D G** / **hights** /. ["1st Inniskillens" = 1st squadron of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons: "V D G" = 5th Dragoon Guards. "Position before Charge" refers to the Charge of the Heavy Brigade. I note the misspelling of "Heights".]



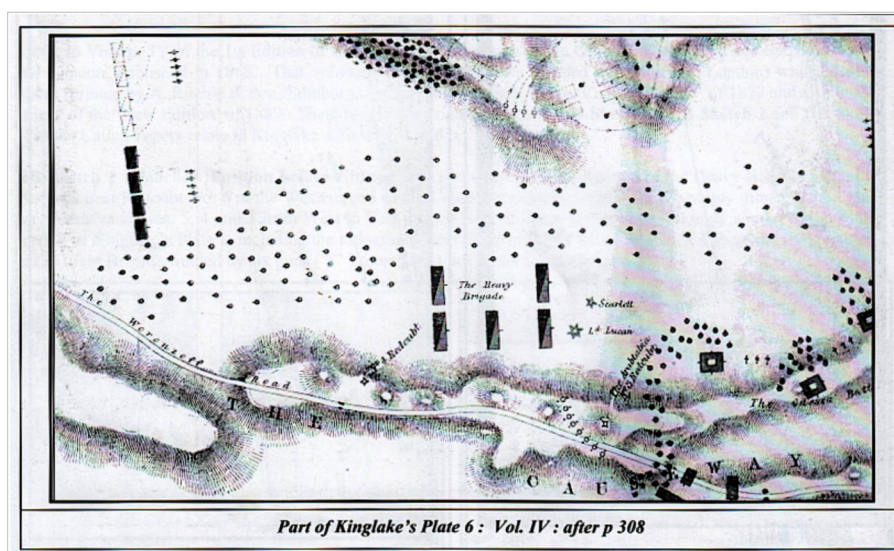
HB Sketch 2 (L0049881) is labelled '**Balaclava 1st Charge**' - the Charge of the Heavy Brigade - and relates similarly to Kinglake's Plate 3, showing the same relative locations for Lucan, Scarlett and the British cavalry regiments, and very similar movement tracks for four of the latter. Lucan is well-placed for observation and control. The conformation of the main body of the Russian massed cavalry, together with their detached flanking squadrons and skirmishers, is identical to that shown in the Plate.

The annotations on HB Sketch 2 are as follows (roughly clockwise from the centre left):- / **4 DG.** / **Vineyards** / **Royals** / (*) **Scarlett** / **1 Innisk** / (*) **Lucan** / **2nd Innisk** / **Greys** / **V D. Gds** / **Balaclava 1st Charge** /. ["4 DG." = 4th Dragoon Guards. "1 Innisk" = 1st squadron of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons. "2nd Innisk" = 2nd squadron of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons. "V D. Gds" = 5th Dragoon Guards. "Balaclava 1st Charge" refers to the Charge of the Heavy Brigade. Cattell repeats the variant spelling 'galoping' in his Memoirs.]

HB Sketch 3 shows the Heavy Brigade before and after its movements in support of the Light Brigade. Again, the Causeway redoubts are incorrectly numbered but the sketch shows their furthest advance - well toward Redoubt 3 - before their recall by Lucan. It corresponds very well to Kinglake's Plate 6.



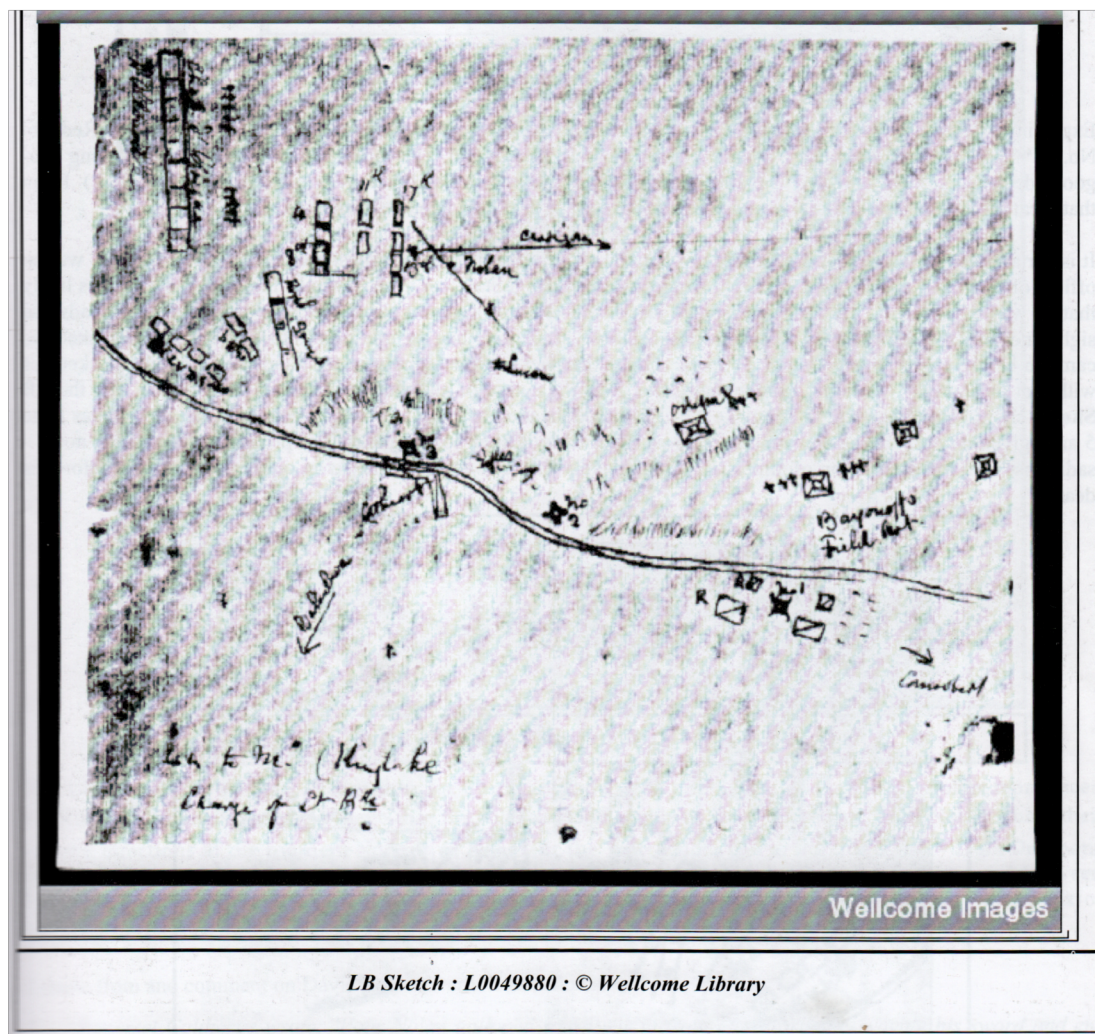
The annotations on HB Sketch 3 are as follows (from the centre left):- / **1st Position / During Charge / No 3 / 2nd Position / No 2 Arabtabia** /. [“1st Position” (parallel to Woronzoff Road) not shown in Kinglake’s Plate 6. “During Charge” refers to the Charge of the Light Brigade. For “No. 3” read “No.4”. “2nd Position” = Furthest Heavy Brigade advance. For “No 2 Arabtabia”, read “No 3 Arabtabia”. HB Sketch 3 does not show the positions of Lucan and Scarlett.]



One of the six sketches in Cattell's Papers is, I believe, of key significance to the printed history of the ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’.

What I describe as the “**LB Sketch**” is freely available on the Internet as L0049880 (via <http://images.wellcome.ac.uk/indexplus/page/Home.html>). It appears in a set of three, grouped under the title ‘Sketches showing disposition and movements of troops during the charge of the Light Brigade, Battle of Balaclava, Crimean War’ (RAMC/391/3/5), but only L0049880 is truly so named. **HB sketch 1**, L0049881 (described here as **HB Sketch 2**) and **HB sketch 3** all show the movements of the Heavy Brigade.

The fifth sketch, carrying the date 'July 1854', shows the Cavalry camp at Devna. The sixth, viewable as L0049882, is a 'bird's-eye view' centred on the Plain of Balaklava. None are signed; only the fifth is dated.

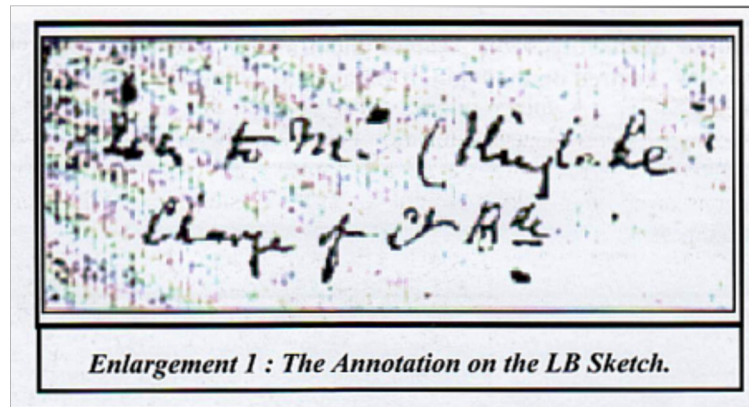


The annotations on L0049880 are as follows (roughly clockwise from the top left):-

/ **Chass. d'Afrique D'Allonville** / **IV & Y.D.Gds** / **6th Royals Greys** / **4th 8th 11th 17th 13th** / (*) Cardigan (*) Nolan (*) Lucan / **Odessa Regt** / **Bayonoff's Field Art.** / **No 1** / -> **Canrobert** / **No 2** / **Rifles** / **No 3** / **Cathcart** / -> **Balaclava** / **Loan to Mr. Kinglake** / **Charge of Lt Bde** /.

["Chass. d'Afrique D'Allonville" = 4th and 1st Chasseurs d'Afrique; Colonel d'Allonville, commanded by General Morris (see 4). "IV & V. D. Gds 6th Royals Greys" = Heavy Brigade Regts. "4th 8th 11th 17th 13th" = Light Brigade Regts. For Redoubts "No 1", "No 2", "No 3" read "No 2", "No 3", "No 4".]

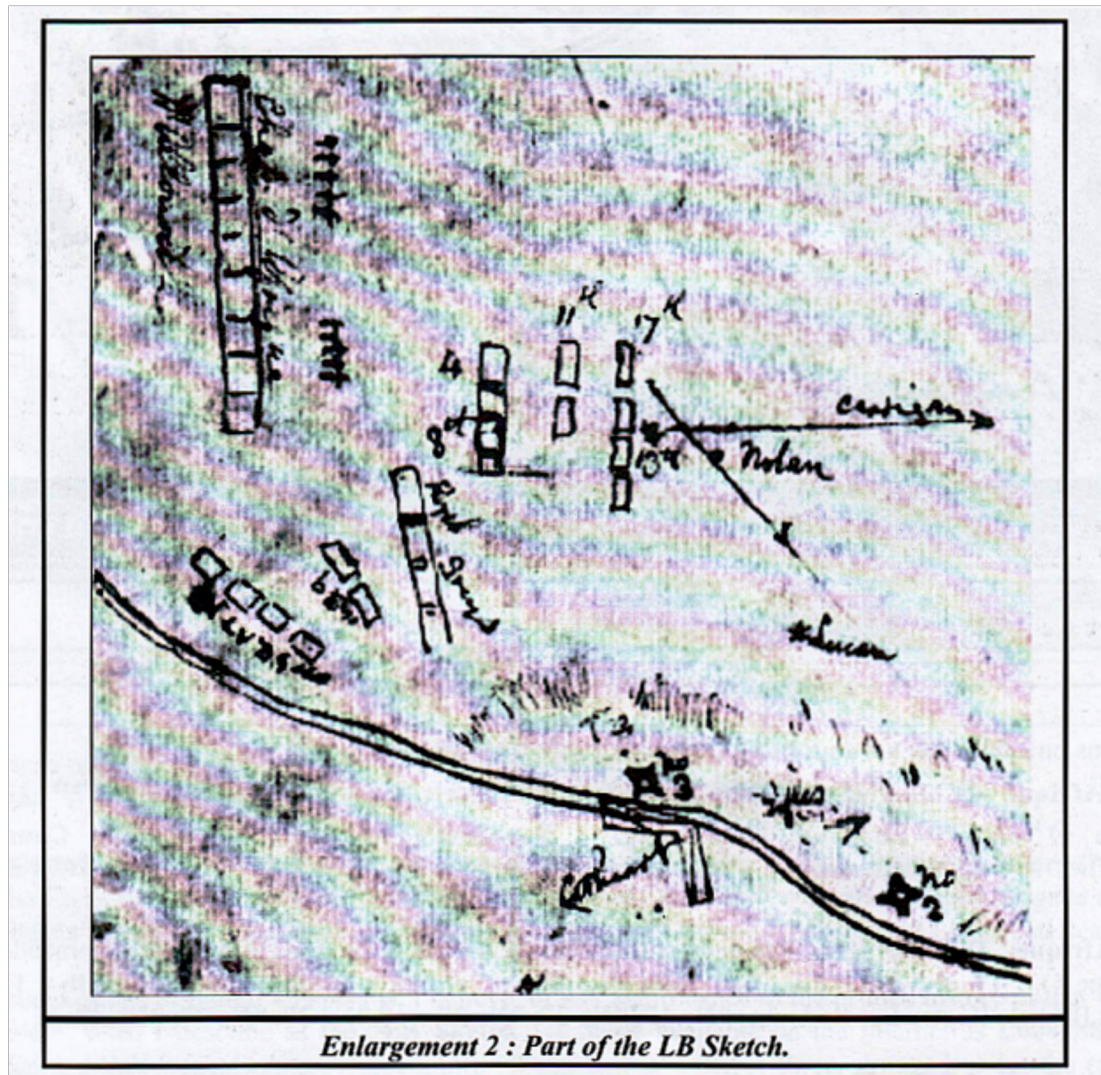
Crucially, I believe, the LB Sketch carries the annotation '**Loan to Mr. Kinglake Charge of Lt Bde**' in Cattell's handwriting. From that, I gather that the LB Sketch was drawn by Cattell himself and was a primary source used by Kinglake in forming his narrative and its illustrations. [*HB Sketches 1, 2 and 3 were very probably also used by Kinglake, given their close correspondence to Plates 1, 3 and 6, respectively.*]



Expecting an advance by his regiment, Cattell could easily have ridden to the area near and to the north of Redoubt No. 4 (“No 3” in the LB Sketch), placing himself to assist as required. (Dr James Mouat of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons detached similarly to save Captain Morris of the 17th Lancers - and thereby win the first medical V.C.) From that location, Cattell would easily have witnessed the start of the Light Brigade’s advance.

It is certainly conceivable that one or more of Kinglake’s informants on the earliest moments of ‘The Charge’ was an officer of the 17th Lancers, the 13th Light Dragoons, Cardigan’s Staff - or even Cardigan himself. It seems less likely that he was in Cathcart’s 4th Division (shown just to the south of Redoubt No. 4) because of the potentially adverse sight-lines into the North Valley.

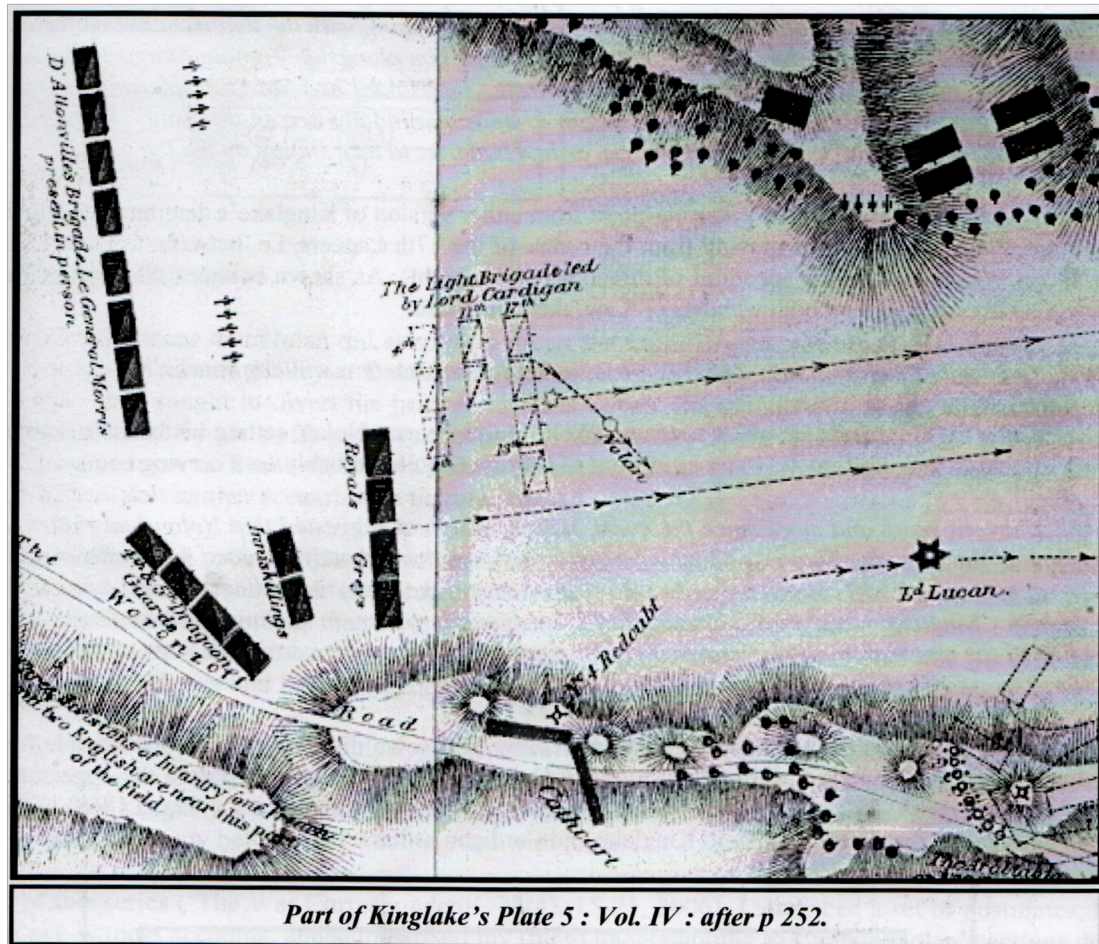
Those concepts, however, entirely beg the question as to why this group of sketches came to be preserved among Cattell’s Papers. Given that fact and the identity of the handwriting on all six sketches with that on Cattell’s Memoirs, I judge that Cattell was the author of all of them. With no clear reason why the LB Sketch should have been lent to Kinglake **AFTER** the publication of Plate 5 in 1868, I conclude that it pre-dates Plate 5 and (given its provenance and annotation) was supplied by Cattell to Kinglake, very probably with written notes - sadly lost with the destruction of almost all of Kinglake’s Crimean correspondence on or, perhaps, shortly before his death.



The LB Sketch and Kinglake's Plate 5 are very similar and the Light Brigade's dispositions are those immediately prior to the Charge, after Lucan ordered the 11th Hussars into a second line. For the Chasseurs d'Afrique, fronted by 10 guns, the sketch shows 8 squadrons, expected for the 4th and 1st Regiments.⁴ The Odessa Regiment's reform into four squares to meet a cavalry advance is shown. There are, however, a number of differences.

The sketch wrongly numbers the redoubts from West to East as 3, 2 and 1, rather than the normal 4, 3 and 2. Kinglake has corrected this common error. Cathcart's 4th Division is shown on and to the south of the Woronzoff Road, as compared with Plate 5 which shows them on and to the north. Lucan's location is more to the West.

The LB Sketch shows six guns for 'Bayanoffs Field Artillery' while Kinglake shows eight and names it as 'Boyanoffs Field Artillery'. It shows nothing of the Russian dispositions on the Fedioukine Heights or at the Eastern end of the North Valley. Kinglake must have had other sources for them.



The LB Sketch shows 'star' (*) locations for Cardigan and Lucan and a 'dot' (.) location for Nolan, reproduced by Kinglake in his Plate 5. I believe that the ruler-aided lines drawn from 'Cardigan' and 'Nolan' show their relative directions at the moment Nolan was killed - at the 'dot' (.) location in front of the 13th Light Dragoons (attested by several accounts). Lucan's placement, well in advance of the Cavalry Division and between Redoubts 4 and 3, appears reasonable for a divisional general seeking to observe and, if need be, control a major advance to the East.

I quote from and comment on David Kelsey's article as follows: -

"... 'Somerset Calthorpe wrote: 'Poor Nolan galloped some way in front of the brigade, waving his sword and encouraging his men by voice and gesture.'"

The statement in the 1st Edition of Calthorpe's book 'Letter from Headquarters', Vol. I, is that Nolan was 'encouraging his men' but that was changed in the 2nd Edition (Chapter VII, p 316) to read 'encouraging the men'. The 'leading' impression is thereby eliminated.

'...Kinglake devoted pages to his hypothesis that Nolan was trying to turn the direction of the cavalry's attack away from the guns in the valley towards the guns on the heights.'... 'He (Kinglake) did say, however, 'Right before him he [Cardigan] saw Captain Nolan...riding across his front from left to right;...Nolan, turning round in his saddle, was shouting and waving his sword.. he rode crossing the front of the brigade, and bearing away to the right front of our advancing squadrons.'...To illustrate this statement, Kinglake appended a footnote: 'This diagram, by an officer who was one of the nearest of all the observers, points out the way in which Nolan's direction deviated from that of Cardigan:-' This is very specific evidence, but there is no scale, and nothing by which to set it in place or time, It's source is anonymous. This is worrying, because

Kinglake sometimes misrepresented his evidence, and it is hard to imagine why the officer who provided it would not have wanted his name revealed."

I have already adduced good evidence that Nolan did try to divert the Light Brigade. The LB Sketch provides place, scale and timing for Nolan's movement and this article identifies Cattell as Kinglake's informant. Given the immediate and continuing controversies after the 'Charge of the Light Brigade', including the acrimonious and, in part, equivocal Cardigan-Calthorpe court case of 1863, I find it easy to believe that Cattell, although willing to inform Kinglake, would have insisted on anonymity.

"... 'These accounts do not tell us Nolan's starting position. Extrapolating Kinglake's diagram backwards suggests that Nolan came from the left wing of the 17th Lancers. As an officer riding with the Regiment but not belonging to it, that is where he should have been. Modern accounts tend to place him alongside Captain Morris in the centre of the Regiment. Kinglake did not specify whence he started; he wrote, 'he [Nolan] had just been speaking to Morris...but the moment the brigade began to advance...he began to move diagonally across the front,' leaving it uncertain whether 'just' implies that Nolan was still with Morris, or had had time to take station on the left wing."

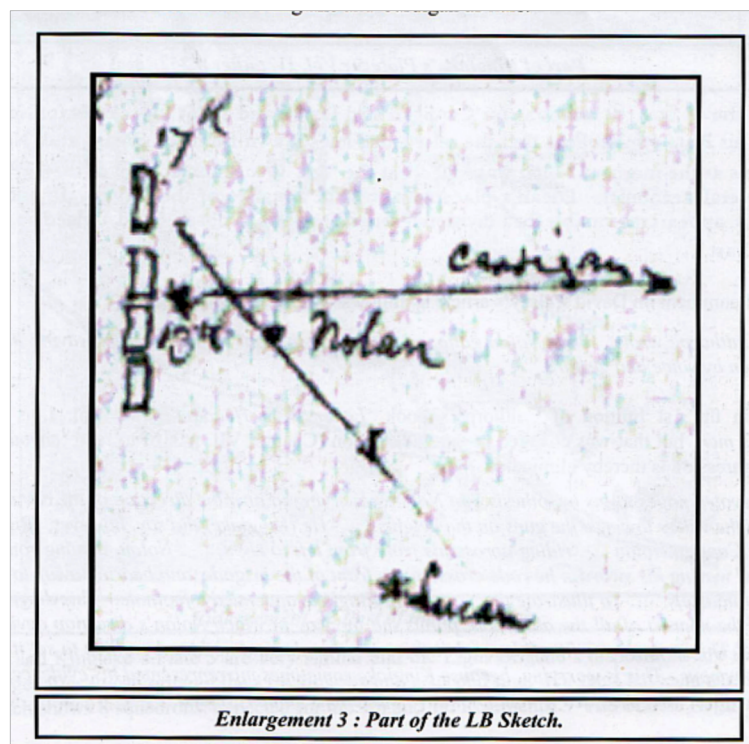
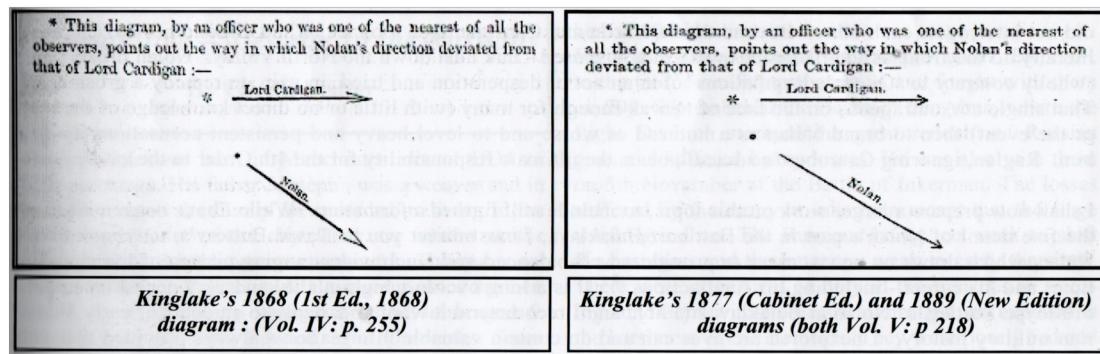
It is, in fact, impossible to define Nolan's starting-point from either version of Kinglake's diagram (see below), but the LB Sketch and Plate 5 show Nolan moving from the centre of the 17th Lancers, i.e. between Captain Morris on his left and Captain White, leading the squadron of direction, on his right. As shown below, Enlargement 3 of the LB Sketch is a great improvement on both versions of Kinglake's diagram.

"We do not know whether Nolan rode a straight course, a dog-leg course, or a winding course."

The first line of the Light Brigade set off at a steady "Walk March" pace. Nolan, setting his horse to a gallop, would have had no trouble in moving forward to cross in front of Cardigan, quite probably on a curving course.

*"...In all the thirteen years and more since the event, nobody else had suggested that Nolan had ridden diagonally across the front of the brigade. That was Kinglake's innovation, one immediately disputed by an officer who had been present. To support it Kinglake offered only two pieces of evidence: the anonymous diagram, and an appeal to Cardigan as a witness. Kinglake wrote in a footnote: 'Lord Cardigan, however, in writing addressed to myself has distinctly confirmed the statements which show that Nolan was riding diagonally across the front of the brigade.' This sentence warrants careful study." **This is incorrect.** Several sources recorded their common view that Nolan did, in fact, cross the brigade front and attempt to divert the Light Brigade towards the Causeway Heights. Some did so long before the appearance of Kinglake's 1st Edition in 1868.*

I discount Maxse's later and less than decisive 'impression' (also in 1868) to the contrary and I see no substantive reason to brand both Kinglake and Cardigan as liars.



SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS:

I have presented evidence that Nolan did attempt to divert the Light Brigade towards the Causeway Heights - or possibly beyond to the South Valley at Balaklava. Remarkably, the LB Sketch can be construed as indicating that Nolan may have sought to divert the brigade towards Lucan, the divisional general, who would have been visible and (surrounded by his staff) easily recognisable. Was Nolan trying to reach Lucan? Was Nolan seeking to cause either Cardigan or Lucan to order a halt or diversion to the Light Brigade's advance? On the present evidence, I believe that neither scenario can be ruled out.

From their presence as a group in Cattell's Papers and their handwriting, I conclude that these sketches were drawn by Cattell himself. From their close correspondence with several of Kinglake's Plates and the clear annotation on the LB Sketch, I conclude that Cattell lent them to Kinglake prior to 1868. In short, I deduce that Cattell was Kinglake's informant as the 'officer who was one of the nearest observers' and that his sketches are authentic records of the Heavy and Light Brigades' movements during the morning of 25th October, 1854.

I have transcribed Cattell's predominantly typescript draft Chapter 2 (produced ca. 1905) on 'Balaklava', which is highly interesting as a record of the cavalry actions. While he does describe Nolan's crossing in front of Cardigan, Cattell uses Kinglake's words, rather than supplying his own. This is consistent with a desire to maintain his anonymity and with my belief that Cattell agreed with Kinglake's version of that event.

In Part IV of this series ('*The War Correspondent*', 24(4), 15-21, 2006), I advanced a set of postulates, from my analysis of eye-witness accounts, and summarised my (then) understanding of Captain Nolan's actions during the Battle of Balaklava on 25th October, 1854. To date, I am aware of no rebuttal or revision.

I now assert that Nolan came down from the Sapoune Ridge via the Col well before 10 a.m. with a first verbal order from Airey to 'retake' the British guns captured by the Russians. Lucan and Cardigan jointly refused this order and Nolan went back up via the Col (possibly with a view to report that non-compliance to the Adjutant-General) and met Higginson on the way. At about 11 a.m., after a discussion with Raglan and Airey, Nolan set out with a second verbal order. He was called back by Airey and handed the written 4th Order. That was written (in haste) by Airey in Raglan's presence. It invoked Raglan's authority as Commander-in-Chief precisely because of the failure of both the written 3rd Order and the first verbal order to produce action. I must stress that Nolan reportedly offered to join the Cavalry advance as a guide and may have been specifically authorised and instructed to do so. He rode down the face of the Sapoune Ridge and met Lucan on a small hillock between Redoubts 4 and 5, possibly near the present location of the British Balaklava Monument.⁵ Nolan delivered the written 4th Order to Lucan - apparently without clarifying the objective. He then moved before the 13th Light Dragoons and later joined Captain Morris in front of the 17th Lancers. Cardigan designated their right front squadron as the 'squadron of direction'. As the Light Brigade moved off at a steady 'Walk March', Nolan crossed at speed diagonally in front of Cardigan, shouting and - with his sword at the 'Right Engage' (equivalent to an order) - pointing to the Causeway Heights. In front of the 13th Light Dragoons, he was hit by a shell fragment which smashed his chest open. His horse turned and carried him back through the squadron interval of the 13th Light Dragoons before his body fell to the ground.

I further assert that compelling evidence exists that Nolan did try to divert (N.B. not 'lead' or 'command') the Light Brigade after it moved off without changing front, at least towards the Causeway Heights. Given the immediacy of the C-in-C's demand, I believe that Nolan did not read the 4th Order and that he assumed that it was explicit. In fact, it did not identify the target guns, nor did it suggest or require that the cavalry should change front before or while advancing. Neither Lucan nor Nolan realised that there was a misunderstanding and they did not interrogate each other. Beyond doubt, Lucan and Cardigan then took it that the direction of advance was literally 'to the front' as their Brigades were then disposed - due East down the North Valley.⁶ Nolan broke ranks (wholly contrary to 'Queen's Regulations'⁷) in an act of desperation and tried, in vain, to remedy a gross error. That single act, outrageous on the face of it, was enough for many (with little or no direct knowledge of the man or the event) then to brand Nolan as a hothead or worse and to level heavy and persistent accusations against him. Raglan, ignoring Canrobert's advice⁴, bears the ultimate responsibility for the 4th Order to the cavalry.

I shall now prepare a larger work on this topic, to include still further information. While I have concentrated on the fine detail of Nolan's part in the Battle of Balaklava, I must direct you to David Buttery's new book about Nolan, which draws on new sources to provide a well-balanced and much wider-ranging picture of the man, his times and his career - including his final actions.⁸ It is a long overdue, high-quality and very necessary update of Moyse-Bartlett's "*Nolan at Balaklava*" (1971) and I recommend it whole-heartedly to students of early Victorian military history.

Unexplored archives can and do contain valuable information - always provided that you are ready to do the work and are willing to delve deeply.

Acknowledgements:- I am most grateful to Mike Hinton for directing me to the Cattell Papers, to the Trustees of the Army Medical Services Museum for permission to publish this article, to the Wellcome Library for permission to reproduce the L0049880 and L0049881 images and to Tony Lucking for wise advice.

ENDNOTES:-

1. That article (based on another in the Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, Spring, 2003) is readily available at <http://crimeantexts.russianwar.co.uk/topics/evandbel.html>. David's invaluable collection of Crimean texts and comments is now maintained as a component of the CWRS web-site via the 'Selected Links' within <http://cwrs.russianwar.co.uk/cwrsentry.html>.

2. For Parts I-IV, see '*The War Correspondent*', Vol. 23 (4), 20-21, 2006; Vol. 24 (2), 7-8, 2006; Vol. 24 (3), 20-25, 2006; Vol. 24 (4), 15-21, 2006.

3. "*British Medical Journal*", 1919 June 14; 1 (3050): 754. "DEPUTY SURGEON-GENERAL WILLIAM CATTELL, R.A.M.C. (retired), who died on March 20th at the age of 89, was one of the last survivors of the Crimean War. He was born at Castle Bromwich, Warwickshire, on November 23rd, 1829 and took the M.R.C.S. in 1853. He entered the army as assistant surgeon on March 28th, 1854, became surgeon on March 28th, 1866, surgeon-major on April 1st, 1873, brigade surgeon - when that rank was first instituted - on November 27th, 1879, and deputy surgeon-general on March 12th, 1882. He retired on November 23rd, 1889. In the regimental days he served successively in the 5th Dragoon Guards, 1854 to 1864; on the staff, 1864 to 1866; in the 20th Foot, the Lancashire Fusiliers, 1866 to 1872; and in the 10th Hussars from 1872. He served in the Crimea with the 5th Dragoon Guards, and took part in the battles of Balaclava, Inkermann, Tchernaya, and the siege of Sevastopol, receiving the medal with three clasps, and also the Sardinian and Turkish medals. In the Afghan war, 1878-79, he served with the 10th Hussars, was present at the capture of Fort Ali Musjid and the action at Futchabad and received the medal and clasp."

4. D. J. Austin, '*The Battle of Balaklava and the 4th Chasseurs d'Afrique*', *The War Correspondent*, Vol. 26 (3), 32-38, 2008.

5. The interpreter John Blunt stated:- "After delivering a message to the Pasha, I followed Lord Lucan and some of his Staff to a small hillock between redoubts No. 4 and No. 5 from where we saw the Guards and other Regiments descending from Sebastopol plateau into the plain. As most of the staff had been sent with orders to the Cavalry Brigades, only the Second Aide-de-Camp (Captain the Honourable Charteris), myself and an Orderly remained with Lord Lucan, when shortly after Captain Nolan rode up close to his Lordship, saluted and delivered to him a written order from Lord Raglan." [D. J. Austin, '*Blunt Speaking: The Crimean War Reminiscences of John Elijah Blunt, Civilian Interpreter*', CWRS SP 33, 2006 (p. 27)]. That "orderly" was very probably TM Henry Joy (17th Lancers), who was Staff Trumpeter (also known as Trumpet Orderly or Orderly Trumpet) to the Cavalry Division under Lord Lucan. From that location, Nolan very probably moved to the right front of the Light Brigade and crossed before the 13th Light Dragoons on his way to join Captain Morris and the 17th Lancers.

6. After the start of the Light Brigade advance, the Heavy Brigade followed them, at increasing distance in the rear. Lucan and his Staff, between the Light and Heavy Brigades, took losses on

being fired on, perhaps by the Odessa Regiment and Boyanoff's field artillery. The Heavy Brigade Regiments took severe casualties before being ordered by Lucan to retire.

7. I thank Tim Pickles and others in the Yahoo Crimean War Group for forceful and useful information.

8. David Buttery, "*Messenger of Death: Captain Nolan and the Charge of the Light Brigade*", Pen and Sword, Barnsley, 2008. ISBN 978 1 84415 756 3. ImoC.

... cannon to right of them cannon to left of them,
cannon in front of them volleyed and thundered...